

Transition Adviser – Case Studies

	<p>Name: Helene Culleton</p> <p>“Transitions is everybody’s business”</p>
<p>School: briefly outline your school location, student profile and any other points of interest</p>	<p>Girrakool Education and Training Unit is situated at Kariong, within the Frank Baxter Juvenile Justice Centre. The school caters for 90 students, ages 16 – 21 years in 15 classes, as well as providing a number of TAFE and other external agency delivered programs. All students have been committed by the courts to custodial sentences of varying lengths. The majority of students present with varying degrees of behavioural / emotional disabilities, often with clinical diagnoses. Aboriginal students currently represent approximately 45% of the total school enrolment. NESB enrolment is at 35%, with a disproportionate representation from Arabic, South Pacific Island and Asian cultures.</p>
<p>My primary role(s) in the school</p>	<p>Transitions, Faculty and Teacher Supervisor, team member for school planning and milestone writing.</p>
<p>I was trained as TA in... what year?</p>	<p>2012</p>
<p>My role as Transition Adviser: include if you work in a team approach and the impact of working this way. Who are the targeted students?</p>	<p>Co-ordinator of the Transition Team, organising weekly Transition Team meetings, Transitions Community liaison contact, Co-ordinator of Transition and Well-being programs, Writing pathways for students and creating opportunities / contacts for students’ pre and post-release, attending Juvenile Justice Client Services Meetings, attending Juvenile Justice ATSI meetings. Part of our students’ rehabilitation depends upon their successful return to the community.</p>
<p>My major achievements in this role: Outline what activity or activities has/have most benefitted your students and the school. Include if possible change in school culture / value of partnerships / connection with parents etc.</p>	<p>The Aboriginal Students’ Leadership Committee co-founder. This is an important safe place for many of our Aboriginal students to have a voice, and learn mentoring skills for other students. Mentoring and supporting culture is essential for our students’ self-perceptions. University programs run through Wollotuka Institute (University of Newcastle) and PATHE (University of Western Sydney). These programs are run to environmentally put our students onto university campuses, so that they can develop positive efficacy and self-advocacy in regards to their futures.</p>

<i>The challenges I have experienced:</i> Outline not only the challenges but also strategies that enabled you to overcome the challenges.	The biggest challenge is securing employment, housing and mentoring for students who have been in custody. Unemployment is high and this can greatly impact on students' attitudes for a positive transition back into the community. We provide a great deal of well-being programs and we also provide opportunities for students to continue studying at TAFE and universities.
<i>What I have learnt in this role.</i>	It is impossible to take on the role single-handed. You will not benefit the students unless there is a holistic approach. A positive student approach to schooling is developed when students have a transitional goal to work towards.
<i>The impact of the TA initiative on the school and its community.</i>	Transitions is everybody's business. To maximise opportunities for students, and gain contacts, it is important to enthuse all staff towards transitioning students. It is also important to involve the community stakeholders.
<i>My school's vision for the TA role into the future.</i>	It would be highly beneficial for students' within custody, to have assured employment post-release. This would greatly reduce the risk of recidivism.
<i>Do you have a story of change/impact that the TA role has had on other developments in the school or its community?</i> (This last question is particularly relevant to a TA who has been in position for say 2-4 years, as we are keen to document a couple of case studies over time.) The Transition Team has broadened its community contacts and programs. We now have community members come in for our weekly Transition Meetings. We also have a strong and collaborative relationship with Juvenile Justice. This ensures that many of our transition programs are able to run. It also aides the well-being of our students and provides important contacts for their transition plans.	
Your story: I came to Girrakool school to teach Visual Arts over a decade ago. I had the pleasure of teaching some wonderful students, which lead me into an interest of seeing them transition positively back into the community. Our cohort can be considered by some as destined to fail. This is why our school has a strong focus on successfully transitioning students in order for them to have a chance to become positive community members.	

To be completed by the Principal:

Principal Name: KEVIN ARMSTRONG

I have read this document provided by the Transition Adviser and support the information provided within. I understand that any changes as a result of editing and preparation for publication will be sent to me for approval prior to publication.

Signed: K. Armstrong Date: 12/08/16